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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/564,031	06/07/2006	Karl Malcolm	02911.007800.	4013
5514	7590	01/23/2009		
FITZPATRICK CELLA HARPER & SCINTO			EXAMINER	
30 ROCKEFELLER PLAZA			ELLIS, SUEZU Y	
NEW YORK, NY 10112			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			2876	
MAIL DATE		DELIVERY MODE		
01/23/2009		PAPER		

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/564,031	Applicant(s) MALCOLM ET AL.
	Examiner Suezu Ellis	Art Unit 2876

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED. (35 U.S.C. § 133).

Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 23 December 2008.

2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1 and 3-18 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 1 and 3-18 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on 10 January 2006 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a) All b) Some * c) None of:

1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)	4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)	Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)	5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____	6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

FINAL REJECTION

Examiner's Remarks

1. The office action mailed October 28, 2008 is hereby vacated. The action that follows is substituted thereof.

Response to Arguments

2. Applicant's arguments, with respect to the rejection(s) of claim(s) 1-18 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 have been fully considered and are persuasive. Therefore, the rejection has been withdrawn.
3. Applicant's arguments with respect to the rejection(s) of claim(s) 1, 13 and 17 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) have been fully considered, however after further review, applicant's remarks is not found to be persuasive, because the pore structure further includes continuous pores, where the pore is one that has an opening on both faces of the microporous wall connected there through (see col. 10, lines 39-42 of Zaffroni US 3,993,072). Therefore, the examiner interprets the continuous pores to be openings extending through the sheath (wall) to the at least one reservoir.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

4. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

5. Claims 1, 3, 6, 7, 13 and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Zaffroni (US 3,993,072).

With respect to claim 1, Zaffroni discloses in Example 1, an implant device comprising at least one reservoir, the at least one reservoir containing at least one pharmacologically active agent (progesterone) or a prodrug thereof, dispersed in a hydrophobic elastomeric polymer (polydimethylsiloxane), and a porous sheath (wall) that surrounds the at least one reservoir, wherein the implant device is an intravaginal drug delivery device for administration into a vaginal environment (Examples 16 and 18; col. 23, lines 37-38; col. 24, lines 17-20). Zaffroni further discloses the pore structure of the sheath (wall) further includes continuous pores, wherein a pore has an opening on both faces of the sheath connected therethrough thereby forming continuous diffusional paths (col. 10, lines 39-49). Therefore, the sheath is considered to discontinuously surround the at least one reservoir so as to define at least one hole or opening, the at least one hole or opening extending through the sheath to the at least one reservoir, so that, in use, at least part of the at least one reservoir is directly exposed to the vaginal environment.

With respect to claim 3, Zaffroni discloses the at least one hole or opening is on both faces of the sheath (wall) and is connected therethrough, therefore is considered to extend to the surface of the at least one reservoir and/or extends partially into the at least one reservoir (col. 10, lines 39-42).

With respect to claim 6, Zaffroni discloses the continuous pores, such as straight continuous pores, has the at least one hole or opening is on both faces of the sheath (wall) and is connected therethrough and forms a diffusional path for passage through the sheath (col. 10, lines 39-49), therefore is considered to extend through the sheath substantially normal to the reservoir surface.

With respect to claim 7, Zaffroni discloses in Fig. 8, the device is a ring that is substantially circular in transverse cross-section, and the sheath has a multiple micropores formed with continuous diffusional paths through the sheath (col. 24, lines 20-22). Zaffroni further describes the pore structure of the sheath having continuous pores, where each pore has an opening on both faces of the sheath (wall) and is connected therethrough (col. 10, lines 39-42). Therefore, the examiner interprets the at least one hole (continuous pore/continuous diffusional path) extends substantially radially through the sheath at the inner circumference of the ring or at the outer circumference of the ring.

With respect to claim 13, Zaffroni discloses in Example 18, the device is a ring (toroid shape).

With respect to claim 17, Zaffroni discloses the intravaginal device can be made by forming a reservoir by dispersing at least one pharmacologically active agent in a pharmaceutically acceptable hydrophobic elastomer polymer, curing the reservoir, and applying a sheath to partly surround the reservoir (col. 20, lines 28-37).

6. Claims 1, 3, 5, 13 and 16-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Saleh et al. (US 5,972,372).

With respect to claim 1, Saleh et al. discloses in Figs. 4A-4C and 5, an intravaginal drug delivery device for administration into a vaginal environment, the device comprising at least one reservoir (42) (channel that includes elements 44, 49 of Figs. 4A-4C and elements 59, 54 and 53 of Fig. 5), the at least one reservoir containing at least one pharmacologically active agent or a prodrug thereof (44, 54) dispersed in a polymer, and a sheath (40, 52) discontinuously surrounding the at least one reservoir so as to define at least one hole or opening (opening of the channel), the at least one hole or opening extending through the sheath to the at least one reservoir, so that, in use, at least part of the at least one reservoir is directly exposed to the vaginal environment (col. 5, line 61 – col. 6, line 12; col. 6, lines 37-61). Saleh et al. further teaches in col. 6, lines 46-57, the polymer is a hydrophobic elastomeric polymer in a preferred embodiment, and Examples 2-7 demonstrates the hydrophobic elastomeric polymer being polydimethylsiloxane.

With respect to claim 3, Saleh et al. discloses the at least one hole or opening extends to the surface of the at least one reservoir and/or extends partially into the at least one reservoir (col. 5, line 65 - col. 6, line 3).

With respect to claim 5, Saleh et al. discloses the at least one hole or opening is substantially cylindrical (channel having a diameter) with a diameter in the range of about 0.5mm - 6.5 mm (col. 9, lines 48-51; Example 6).

With respect to claim 13, Saleh et al. discloses the device is a partial or complete toroid shape (col. 6, line 4).

With respect to claim 16, Saleh et al. discloses the sheath comprises at least one additional pharmacologically active agent (col. 6, lines 33-36; col. 7, lines 42-46).

With respect to claim 17, Saleh et al. discloses forming a reservoir (core) by dispersing at least one pharmacologically active agent in a pharmaceutically acceptable hydrophobic elastomeric polymer (polydimethylsiloxane), curing the reservoir (room temperature vulcanizing), and applying a sheath to partly surround the reservoir (insertion of the core) (Example 2; col. 4, lines 14-15; col. 7, lines 56-59; col. 8, lines 4-8).

With respect to claim 18, Saleh et al. discloses injecting a reservoir material into a hollow sheath (col. 4, lines 24-29; col. 8, lines 13-23; Example 7).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

7. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

8. Claim 8 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Zaffroni.

With respect to claim 8, Zaffoni addresses all the limitations of claim 7, and further discloses multiple pores formed with continuous diffusional paths (continuous

pores with openings) along the inner or outer circumference of the intravaginal drug delivery device (col. 24, lines 17-23).

However, Zaffroni fails to expressly disclose the exact number of holes or openings.

Zaffroni further teaches the porosity affects the diffusion rate of the drug through the media in the wall (col. 9, lines 31-36).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the number of holes or openings in the inner or outer circumference of the intravaginal drug delivery device in order to attain the desired diffusion rate.

9. Claims 1, 3, 6, 9-12, 14 and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Baker et al. (US 3,926,188) in view of Chappaz et al. (US 2,962,023).

With respect to claim 1, Baker et al. discloses in Fig. 5, a drug delivery device for administration to an environment, the device comprising at least one reservoir (15), the at least one reservoir containing at least one pharmacologically active agent (14) or a prodrug thereof dispersed in a polymer, and a sheath (21) discontinuously surrounding the at least one reservoir so as to define at least one hole or opening (end surface opening for element 21), the at least one hole or opening extending through the sheath to the at least one reservoir, so that, in use, at least part of the at least one reservoir is directly exposed to the environment (col. 4, lines 27-48). Baker et al. further discloses the polymer being a hydrophobic elastomeric polymer, such as polydimethylsiloxane, polyvinyl chloride and poly(ethylene-co-vinyl acetate) (col. 5, lines

52, 57-58, 60-61; col. 6, lines 6-7), and further demonstrates a drug incorporated into a hydrophobic elastomeric polymer in Example 1.

Baker et al. fails to expressly disclose using the cylindrical drug delivery device in Fig. 5 in a vaginal environment.

However, Baker et al. does disclose using the drug delivery device in a vaginal environment, and when used in such an environment, the device will be sized and shaped accordingly (col. 6, lines 39-43).

Chappaz et al. teaches it is known in the art to use cylindrical drug delivery devices in the vaginal environment (col. 2, lines 38-40; col. 3, lines 19-23).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to use the cylindrical drug delivery device of the modified Baker et al. in a vaginal area in order to be compatible with the size and shape of the insertion site for the predictable result of comfortably treating the vaginal area.

With respect to claim 3, the modified Baker et al. discloses in Fig. 5, the at least one hole or opening (end surface opening for element 21) extends to the surface of the at least one reservoir (15) and/or extends partially into the at least one reservoir.

With respect to claim 6, the modified Baker et al. discloses in Fig. 5, the at least one hole or opening (end surface opening for element 21) extends through the sheath (21) substantially normal to the reservoir surface (22, 23).

With respect to claim 9, the modified Baker et al. discloses in Fig. 5, the device is a substantially cylindrical rod device, and said at least one hole or opening is provided at each terminal end (22, 23) of the rod.

With respect to claim 10, the modified Baker et al. discloses in Fig. 5, the rod device defines a right circular cylinder and each base of the rod is partly or fully exposed, to define said holes.

With respect to claim 11, the modified Baker et al. addresses all the limitations of claim 9, however fails to expressly disclose additional holes or openings provided that extend substantially radially through the sheath.

Chappaz et al. discloses in Fig. 2, a cylindrical intravaginal drug delivery device for use in a vaginal cavity, having at least one hole or opening at each of the terminal ends and additional holes or openings provided extending substantially radially through the sheath (10).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the device of the modified Baker et al. to include additional holes or openings extending substantially radially through the sheath in order to deliver the desired pharmacologically active agent along the entire device to cover more surface area of the vaginal cavity wall for medication or to diffuse the medication in a desired direction, as taught by Chappaz et al. (col. 1, lines 32-35; col. 3, lines 1-6, 19-23).

With respect to claim 12, the modified Baker et al. addresses all the limitations of claim 11, however fails to expressly disclose there are one to thirty of said further holes or openings along the circumference of the rod.

Chappaz et al. teaches the diffusion rate and the amount of drug that is to be dispensed from the reservoir is dependent on the number of holes in the sheath (col. 1, lines 36-42).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the number of additional holes or openings in order to further modify the desired diffusion rate of the drug from the reservoir, or to further modify the amount of drug to be dispensed, as desired, as taught by Chappaz et al. (col. 1, lines 36-42; col. 3, lines 6-9).

With respect to claims 14 and 15, the modified Baker et al. discloses the reservoir additionally comprises at least one pore-forming excipient (starch) (col. 6, lines 6-14).

10. Claims 1, 3, 6, and 13-15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Theeuwes (US 4,217,898) in view of Zaffroni.

With respect to claim 1, Theeuwes discloses in Fig. 2, an intravaginal drug delivery device for administration into a vaginal environment, the device comprising at least one reservoir (13), the at least one reservoir containing at least one pharmacologically active agent (19) or a prodrug thereof dispersed in a polymer, and a sheath (15) discontinuously surrounding the at least one reservoir so as to define at least one hole or opening (12), the at least one hole or opening extending through the sheath to the at least one reservoir, so that, in use, at least part of the at least one reservoir is directly exposed to the environment (col. 4, lines 23-54; col. 5, lines 1-14).

Theeuwes fails to expressly teach an example wherein the drug is dispersed in a hydrophobic elastomeric polymer.

However, Theeuwes discloses various types of polymers as suitable materials for the reservoir, and further suggests using a hydrophobic elastomeric polymer (polyvinyl chloride) (col. 7, line 59).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the type of polymer used in order to provide the desired solubility of the pharmacologically active agent of the desired pharmacologically active agent used, as taught by Zaffroni (col. 6, lines 12-22). Further, it has been held to be within the general skill of a worker in the art to select a known material on the basis of its suitability for the intended use as a matter of obvious design choice. *In re Leshin*, 125 USPQ 416.

With respect to claim 3, the modified Theeuwes discloses in Fig. 2, the at least one hole or opening (12) extends to the surface of the at least one reservoir (13) and/or extends partially into the at least one reservoir.

With respect to claim 6, the modified Theeuwes illustrates in Fig. 2, the at least one hole or opening (12) extends through the sheath (15) substantially normal to the reservoir surface.

With respect to claims 7 and 13, the modified Theeuwes addresses all the limitations of claim 1, and further illustrates in Fig. 2, the at least one hole or opening located on the circumference of the device.

However fails to expressly disclose the device being a ring that is substantially circular in transverse cross-section.

However, Theeuwes discloses the drug delivery device can be sized and shaped depending on the desired environment it is intended to be used in, such as within a vaginal environment (col. 5, lines 1-4, 48-53).

Zaffroni teaches it is known in the art for intravaginal drug delivery devices to be in a ring shape (toroid shape) (Example 18).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the shape of the device in order to lend itself for a comfortable uterine placement and retention, as desired. Further, a change in shape is generally recognized as being within the level of one of ordinary skill in the art. *In re Dailey*, 357 F.2d 669, 149 USPQ 47 (CCPA 1966)

Examiner further notes, the modification of the shape of Fig. 2 to be a ring shape would still include the at least one hole or opening on the outer circumference of the ring.

With respect to claims 14 and 15, the modified Theeuwes discloses the reservoir comprises at least one pore-forming excipient (solvent) (col. 7, lines 14-15).

11. Claim 4 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Theeuwes modified by Zaffroni as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Brooke (US 3,924,622).

With respect to claim 4, the modified Theeuwes addresses all the limitations of claim 1, however fails to expressly disclose the at least one hole or opening is in the shape of a slit.

Brooke discloses an intravaginal device having a slit (Figs. 1 and 3). Brooke further teaches that the shape of the hole or opening in a drug delivery device affects the release rate of the drug (abstract; col. 3, lines 7-11).

It would have been an obvious design choice to modify the shape of the hole or opening in order to modify the release rate of the pharmacologically active agent as desired. Further, a change in shape is generally recognized as being within the level of one of ordinary skill in the art. *In re Dailey*, 357 F.2d 669, 149 USPQ 47 (CCPA 1966)

12. Claims 5 and 8-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Theeuwes modified by Zaffroni as applied to claims 1 and 7 above, and further in view of Chappaz et al.

With respect to claim 5, Theeuwes addresses all the limitations of claim 1, however fails to expressly disclose the shape and size of the at least one hole or opening.

Chappaz et al. discloses in Figs. 1, an intravaginal drug delivery device having a plurality of holes that are substantially cylindrical (round hole which inherently has a depth through a sheath). Chappaz et al. further teaches the holes are 1/32 inch in diameter, therefore is within the claimed diameter range (col. 4, lines 5-8).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the shape and size of the at least one hole or opening in order to further modify the desired diffusion rate of the drug from the reservoir, or to further modify the amount of drug to be dispensed. Further, a change in size and shape is generally recognized as being

within the level of one of ordinary skill in the art. *In re Rose*, 105 USPQ 237(CCPA 1955); *In re Dailey*, 357 F.2d 669, 149 USPQ 47 (CCPA 1966)

With respect to claim 8, the modified Theeuwes addresses all the limitations of claim 7, however fails to expressly disclose the number of holes along the inner or outer circumference of the intravaginal drug delivery device.

Chappaz et al. teaches the diffusion rate and the amount of drug that is to be dispensed from the reservoir is dependent on the number of holes in the sheath (col. 1, lines 36-42).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the number of additional holes or openings in order to further modify the desired diffusion rate of the drug from the reservoir, or to further modify the amount of drug to be dispensed, as desired, as taught by Chappaz et al. (col. 1, lines 36-42; col. 3, lines 6-9).

With respect to claim 9, the modified Theeuwes addresses all the limitations of claim 1, and further illustrates in Fig. 2 the device is a substantially cylindrical rod device.

The modified Theeuwes fails to expressly disclose the at least one hole or opening is provided at each terminal end of the rod.

However, Theeuwes does teach the rate of release for a given surface can be controlled and the direction of the release can be preselected by orienting the releasing surface (at least one hole or opening) to a preselected direction (col. 6, lines 25-28).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to include the at least one hole or opening at each terminal end of the rod in order to provide for

the release of the drug in the desired directions, as demonstrated in Fig. 2 of Chappaz et al.

With respect to claim 10, the modified Theeuwes addresses all the limitations of claim 9, however fails to expressly disclose rod device defines a right circular cylinder.

Theeuwes teaches changing the size and shape of the device depending on the desired environment in which it is intended on being used (col. 5, lines 48-53).

It would have been an obvious design choice to modify the shape of the device since it has been held that a mere change in shape of an element is generally recognized as being within the level of one of ordinary skill in the art when the change in shape is not significant to the function of the combination. *In re Dailey*, 357 F.2d 669, 149 USPQ 47 (CCPA 1966). Further, one of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to select the shape of the device for the purpose of providing for a comfortable placement and retention of the device in the vaginal environment.

With respect to claim 11, the modified Theeuwes addresses all the limitations of claim 9, and further illustrates in Fig. 2, multiple holes or openings (12) provided extending substantially radially through the sheath.

With respect to claim 12, the modified Theeuwes addresses all the limitations of claim 11, however fails to expressly disclose the number of holes along the inner or outer circumference of the intravaginal drug delivery device.

Chappaz et al. teaches the diffusion rate and the amount of drug that is to be dispensed from the reservoir is dependent on the number of holes in the sheath (col. 1, lines 36-42).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the number of additional holes or openings in order to further modify the desired diffusion rate of the drug from the reservoir, or to further modify the amount of drug to be dispensed, as desired, as taught by Chappaz et al. (col. 1, lines 36-42; col. 3, lines 6-9).

Conclusion

13. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure:

Mahashabde et al. (US 6,264,973) discloses in Figs. 7A and 7Ba vaginal ring having bores, and in Figs. 9A and 9B, a vaginal ring having notches (openings in the inner or outer circumference).

Schöpflin et al. (US 4,012,496) discloses a vaginal ring having pocket-like recesses.

Nabahi (US 6,039,968 and US 6,103,256) discloses an intravaginal drug delivery device.

Pocknell (US 4,888,074) discloses a method of making a therapeutic ring.

14. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP

§ 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Telephone/Fax Information

15. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Suezu Ellis whose telephone number is (571) 272-2868. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:30am-5pm (Monday-Friday).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Michael Woodward can be reached on (571) 272-8373. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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SE

/MP WOODWARD/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 1615